

Women's Top Health Threats

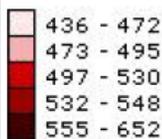
Rank	Cause	Percentage of female deaths
1	Heart Disease	25.8
2	Cancer	22.0
3	Stroke	6.7
4	Chronic lower respiratory diseases	5.3
5	Alzheimer's disease	4.2
6	Unintentional injuries	3.5
7	Diabetes	3.0
8	Influenza and pneumonia	2.5
9	Kidney disease	1.9
10	Septicemia	1.5

No. 1- Heart Disease

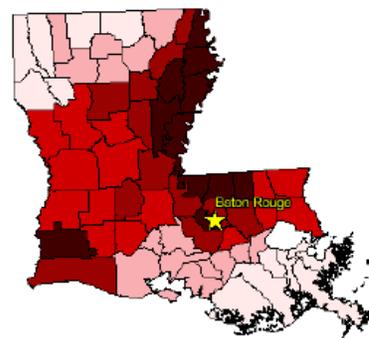
Heart disease is the most significant health concern for women in the United States today, responsible for nearly 500,000 deaths each year. In fact, heart disease is responsible for more deaths in women than all forms of cancer combined. Fortunately, heart disease is one of the most preventable health conditions.

Heart Disease Death Rates, All Women, ages 35+, 1996-2000

Age-adjusted Average Annual Deaths per 100,000



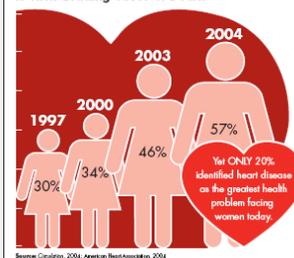
State Rate **492**
National Rate **438**



To help reduce your risk:

- Avoid smoking and limit the amount of alcohol consumed
- Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and whole grain products
- Exercise regularly
- Control other health conditions that may put a strain on the heart, such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes

Awareness Among Women That Heart Disease Is Their Leading Cause of Death



No. 2- Cancer

According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), the most common cause of cancer death in U.S. women is lung cancer, and 90 percent of the deaths are linked to cigarette smoking. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in U.S. women. It is estimated that more than 211,00 women will be diagnosed and about 40,000 women die of breast cancer each year. The third leading cause of cancer death for women is colorectal cancer. At least 1/3 of all cancer deaths are related to nutrition and other controllable lifestyle factors.

To help reduce your risk:

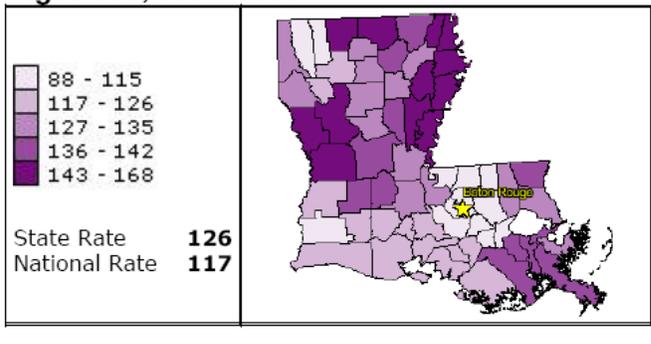
- Don't smoke
- Exercise regularly
- Eat a healthy diet
- Avoid excessive sun exposure
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink
- Have regular preventative health screenings
- Know your family medical history and review it with your doctor



No. 3- Stroke

Stroke is one of the leading causes of disability in America. Smoking and uncontrolled high blood pressure are important risk factors for stroke. Each year, about 55,000 more women than men have a stroke. Among women younger than 60 years, cigarette smoking is associated with an increased relative risk of stroke. Although many aspects can be controlled to help reduce the risk of stroke, there are some which cannot, such as family history, age, sex, and race.

Stroke Death Rates, All Women, Ages 35+, 1991-1998



Factors that help reduce your risk:



- Avoid smoking
- Control blood pressure
- Lower cholesterol
- Limit saturated fats
- Exercise regularly

No. 4- Chronic lower respiratory diseases

Chronic lower respiratory diseases are diseases that affect the lungs. The most deadly of these is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a condition which makes it hard to breathe. COPD includes two main illnesses: Emphysema and Chronic bronchitis. Most cases of COPD are preventable by avoiding smoking, avoiding secondhand smoke, and avoiding irritants that may contribute to COPD, such as chemical fumes, air pollution, and dust. Damage to the lungs caused by COPD cannot be repaired but it may be possible to slow it down. If you suspect you have COPD, contact your physician for a simple test of COPD.



No. 5- Alzheimer's disease



Alzheimer's disease, which affects an estimated 4.5 million Americans, is a progressive, degenerative brain disorder. What could initially begin as slight memory loss and confusion eventually can lead to irreversible mental impairment. This condition affects more women than men. Nearly 42,000 women die of Alzheimer's each year at more than twice the incidence of men. On average, women live longer than men and since the risk of Alzheimer's is known to increase with age, this could be a possible explanation of why it is more commonly seen in women.

No. 6- Unintentional Injuries

In 2006, women aged 65 years and older had the highest rate of injury due to unintentional falls (59.7 per 1,000 women), while slightly more than 19 per 1,000 women aged 18-34 and 35-44 years experienced fall-related injuries. Unintentional injuries sustained as motor vehicle occupants were the second leading cause of injury among 18- to 34-year-olds (18.7 per 1,000), while unintentional overexertion was the second leading cause of injury among women aged 35-44 and 45-64 years (13.7 and 9.3 per 1,000, respectively). Among women aged 65 years and older, being unintentionally struck by or against an object was the second leading cause of injury (5.7 per 1,000).

No. 7- Diabetes

In 2005, 20.8 million people, or 7.0% of the population had diabetes (CDC). Younger women (18-44 years) show twice the diabetes incidence rates (4 percent) of men (2.1 percent) of similar age, but men outpace women 15 percent to 10.7 percent in the 45-64 age category. Advanced diabetes can cause blindness, kidney failure, and severe nerve damage. Individuals with diabetes are also two to four times more likely to suffer from stroke and die of heart disease. Type 2 diabetes is the most common form and can be prevented.



To help reduce your risk of diabetes: maintain a healthy weight, eat a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and get fasting blood sugar level checked periodically.

No. 8- Influenza and Pneumonia

Combined, pneumonia and influenza account for just under 3 percent of all American female deaths. Influenza, commonly called the flu, is a contagious lung disease caused by a virus, while pneumonia is an infection of the lung, with bacterial pneumonia being the most deadly type. Yearly flu shots can be up to 90 percent effective in preventing influenza in healthy adults, and the pneumococcal vaccine can lower your chances of getting pneumonia by more than half.



No. 9 Kidney Disease

Kidney disease is on the rise, particularly in African Americans and women over 50 years of age. African-Americans are nearly 4 times as likely as whites to have kidney failure. High blood pressure and diabetes are the leading causes of kidney failure in African-Americans. Diabetes and high blood pressure can damage your kidneys over time, without your knowing it, so diagnosis of both conditions as soon as possible is very important to prevent kidney and neurological damage. Women who drink two cans of soda a day face almost double the risk of early kidney disease according to researchers. The same risk does not apply to men. However, men are fair worse than women when diagnosed with kidney disease.

No. 10—Septicemia

Septicemia is a serious, life-threatening infection that gets worse very quickly. It can arise from infections throughout the body, including infections in the lungs, abdomen, skin, and urinary tract. Sepsis can lead to organ dysfunction, low blood pressure or insufficient blood flow to one or more organs. It is important to attend to any infection involving fever, aches and pains and begin a treatment program as soon as possible.

Leading a healthy lifestyle— including eating healthy foods, staying physically active, and getting regular checkup are measures that can greatly reduce the risk factors for negative health conditions and contribute to an overall long and healthy life.



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Cerebrovasc Dis 2008;25:517-525

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Nutrition and the Brain

Dementia, Alzheimer's and healthy aging

Diet, exercise, weight loss and weight loss maintenance

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